

Message Text

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SUBJ: METAL WORKERS AGREE TO MODERATE PLATFORM; CHEMICAL NEGOTIATIONS INTERRUPTED

REF: ROME 16663

1. SUMMARY. A RELATIVELY MODERATE BARGAINING PLATFORM HAS BEEN AGREED

TO BY REPRESENTATIVES OF ITALY'S THREE MAJOR METAL WORKERS UNIONS. THE PLATFORM CALLS FOR ACROSS THE BOARD WAGE INCREASES OF 30,000 LIRE MONTHLY AS WELL AS NEGOTIATION RIGHTS OVER CERTAIN MANAGEMENT PREROGATIVES. NEGOTIATIONS IN THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY HAVE BROKEN DOWN OVER THE PREROGATIVES ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING FOUR DAYS OF HIGHLY ANIMATED DEBATE, THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE FLN (THE ROOF ORGANIZATION FOR THE METAL WORKERS UNIONS OF THE THREE MAJOR LABOR CONFEDERATIONS) CONCLUDED IN MILAN ON NOVEMBER 16. THE BARGAINING PLATFORM WHICH EMERGED WAS A VICTORY FOR THE MODERATE LINE ESPOUSED BY THE COMMUNISTS OF THE CGIL SUPPORTED BY A MAJORITY OF THE UIL AND BY A PART

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OF THE RADICAL ELEMENTS REPRESENTED BY THE PDUP. THE OPPOSITION,

WHICH FOUGHT FOR A MORE MILITANT LINE, INCLUDED MOST OF CISL,
THE SOCIALISTS (INCLUDING SOME OF THOSE WITHIN THE CGIL)
AND THE REST OF THE PDUP ELEMENT.

3. THE MAIN POINTS OF THE PLATFORM ARE THESE: A DEMAND FOR 30,000
LIRE (ABOUT DOLS 45) MONTHLY WAGE INCREASES FOR ALL; INCORPORATION
OF ALL WAGE ESCALATION QUOTE POINTS UNQUOTE BEING PAID BY YEAR-
END 1975 INTO MINIMUM WAGE RATES (IN ORDER TO HAVE THEM COUNT
IN PENSION CALCULATIONS); THE ABOLITION OF OVERTIME PAY IN FAVOR
OF COMPENSATORY TIME OFF; THE REDUCTION OF WORK HOURS BY 30
MINUTES DAILY FOR SHIFT WORKERS; AND PRIOR NEGOTIATION WITH THE
INDIVIDUAL FACTORY COUNCILS AND LOCAL UNIONS OVER MANAGEMENT
DECISIONS ON INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENTS, TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS
AND LABOR MOBILITY. THE PLATFORM HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO THE THREE
PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS (CONFINDUSTRIA, INTERSIND --
THE ORGANIZATION FOR STATE PARTICIPATION INDUSTRIES, AND CONFAPI,
WHICH REPRESENTS SMALL BUSINESSES NOT REPRESENTED BY CONFIN-
DUSTRIA). FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS WILL COMMENCE IN A FEW DAYS.

4. LEFT OUT OF THE PLATFORM WERE MAJOR DEMANDS WITH RESPECT TO
SENIORITY PAY AND STEP INCREASES. AT THE URGING OF THE THREE
CONFEDERATIONS (CGIL, CISL AND UIL), THESE WILL BE TAKEN UP LATER
AT THE CONFEDERATE LEVEL WITH TOP MANagements REPRESENTATIVES.
THE REMOVAL OF THESE ITEMS SUBSTANTIALLY FACILITATES THE ACHIEVE-
MENT OF A NEW METAL TRADES CONTRACT, AND REASSERTS CONFEDERATE
CONTROL OVER THE CONSTITUENT UNIONS IN IMPORTANT AREAS OF WAGES
AND WORKING CONDITIONS. THE VOTE ON REMANDING THESE TWO ISSUES
TO THE CONFEDERATIONS (457
TO 392, WITH 18 ABSTENTIONS) WAS EMBLEMATIC OF THE STRONG
DIVISIONS WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE MILAN CONFERENCE. THE CONFEDERATE
HAND CAN ALSO BE SEEN IN THE OVERTIME DEMAND, THE NET EFFECT
OF WHICH WOULD BE TO INCREASE JOBS.

5. THE COMMUNISTS EXPENDED A GREAT AMOUNT OF THEIR MORAL CAPITAL
IN ACHIEVING A MODERATION OF THE PLATFORM DEMANDS. AT ONE POINT,
CGIL-FIOM SECRETARY GENERAL TRENTIN THREATENED TO RESIGN HIS POST
IF THE CONTROVERSIAL SENIORITY/STEP INCREASE ISSUES WERE NOT
REMOVED FROM THE PACKAGE. AGREEMENT ON A NEW CONTRACT WILL BE
TOUGH ENOUGH TO ACHIEVE, PARTICULARLY IF THE FLM INSISTS UPON
THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS ON INVESTMENTS, ETC.
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6. NATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS IN THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY HAVE BROKEN
DOWN OVER THE SAME ISSUE OF MANAGEMENT PREROGATIVES. THE EMPLOYERS
ARE WILLING TO CONCEDE CONSULTATIONS, BUT APPEAR DETERMINED NOT
TO CONCEDE THE UNIONS ANY VETO OVER THESE FUNCTIONS. THE CHEMICAL
UNIONS, IN RESPONSE, HAVE ANNOUNCED 12 HOURS OF STRIKES SPREAD
OVER THREE DATES BETWEEN NOVEMBER 20 AND DECEMBER 3. THE CHEMICAL
WORKERS ARE ALSO DEEPLY INVOLVED IN SEEKING TO PRESENT THE DIS-

CHARGE OF 1450 WORKERS BY PIRELLI, THE LARGE TIRE MANUFACTURER.
THE UNIONS COMPLAIN THAT PIRELLI SEEKS TO FIRE ITALIANS WHILE
EXPANDING ITS INVESTMENTS ABROAD. STRIKES HAVE BEEN PROCLAIMED.
MINISTER OF LABOR TOROS HAS ENTERED THE PICTURE TO SEEK TO MEDIATE
THE PIRELLI SITUATION.

7. COMMENT: LABOR DEMANDS FOR CO-EQUAL RIGHTS IN CERTAIN AREAS
OF MANAGEMENT PREROGATIVES APPEAR TO BE THE MAIN IMPEDIMENT TO
THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AGREEMENT ON THE MAJOR LABOR CONTRACTS CURRENTLY
BEING NEGOTIATED. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE UNIONS EXPECT TO
ACHIEVE THESE DEMANDS THIS YEAR. PROBABLY THEY ARE CONDITIONING
MANAGEMENT FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE GOALS IN THE FUTURE, AND
WILL, IN THE MEANTIME, USE THEM AS TRADING POINTS IN THE BAR-
GAINING PROCESS.BEAUDRY

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